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Kwe', my spirit name is Maqmikewe'skw. My parents are John Stephen Knockwood and Terese Eunice Simon (Deodis). I have four siblings, Henry, Joseph, Roseanne and Noel. We are all survivors of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School. I have six children, Alfred, Frances, Joseph, Ivette, Valerie and Karl Shay; the four oldest are also survivors of the residential school. I have sixteen grandchildren and eleven great grandchildren.

I was registered at the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School when I was five years old and I was discharged at age sixteen. My parents did not realize that they were giving up parental rights of their children to the school principal and the federal government for "as long as they deemed proper," when they registered us there and that they could not get their children back when they wanted to. The Residential School policy of assimilation through education and conversion erased all vestiges of my former self as an Aboriginal person by separating me from my parents' influences and teachings, and segregating and isolating me from the rest of the world as well.

I was released into the free world that had no place and no use for a teenager with a damaged spirit. I still looked Indian, but dressed and spoke and thought like a European. My own people would ask me, "What kind of Indian are you? You can't even speak your own language." I felt that I no longer had a role in my family or community, nor did I fit in white dominant society because of the colour of my skin.

I had to find my own way back to claim my spirit. This journey took me down many paths, including addiction, self-discovery, and cultural renewal. Eventually, with the help of my Mi'kmaw Elders, I found my true identity. One Elder advised me, "Go back to the Residential School and find Isabelle, the child, and bring her to a safe place." Another Elder showed me the bronze statue of the praying Indian on a horse titled "Appeal to the Great Spirit" at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, Massachusetts. He said, "Get off your knees and pray like an Indian."

I joined a 12 Step Recovery Program for sobriety, and went back to school, and eventually I went to College to acquire a Master's Degree in Social Change from Goddard College in Vermont. I received a Bachelor of Arts degree at St. Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. I wrote the book, *Out of the Depths: The Experiences of Mi'kmaw Children of the Indian Residential School in Shubenacadie, N.S.* (Roseway Publishing, 1992). In 2013, St. Mary's University awarded me an Honourary Degree in Civil Law for my life's work with Aboriginal people and residential school survivors.

Presently, I am working on my Master's thesis to study the reactions of residential school survivors to Canada's apology in 2008. We come from different walks of life and consequently, our reactions to the apology will be diverse. Some survivors accepted the apology and forgave, others rejected the apology and are not able or willing to forgive, and no one can forget the trauma of residential schooling.